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Observations on the Importance
and Neutralization

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Importance to DRV Resupply Activities

1. The loss [] assuming there are no large losses of friendly forces, probably would cause little further reduction in road watch and harassment activities in the area. [] road watch effort and the harassment of enemy supply lines in the Route 6/68/61 area of northeastern Laos already has been diminished by increased enemy pressures during the past season []

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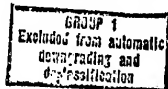
[] More to the point, however, enemy traffic in this area apparently is very small, amounting to only 1-2 trucks per day. Thus the enemy's logistic maneuverability would not be appreciably enhanced by his capture []

The Prospects for B-52 Attacks

2. The identified Communist bivouac and storage areas and troop concentrations in the rolling hills [] offer inviting targets for B-52 operations. The loss of life and materiel resulting from sustained bombing would certainly hinder and perhaps even curtail Communist efforts directed [] The success of the sustained B-52 attacks against Khe Sanh provides an example of the efficacy of intensive bombing against enemy troop concentrations. The enemy troops deployed [] are lodged in terrain offering much less protection against

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ARMY review(s) completed.

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bombing than that near Khe Sanh although a variety of factors tend to reduce the applicability of the Khe Sanh experience

[] we believe it is adequate to give a reasonable approximation of the level of casualties.

3. Based on MACV's analysis of the Khe Sanh experience, the 3-4 battalions currently deployed [] would suffer about 3 fatalities for each B-52 mission (6 aircraft) when the troops are in pre-assault positions.* Fatalities would rise to about 9 for each mission when the troops are in assault position.** Our own analysis indicates that there would be at least one seriously wounded for each killed. Thus total casualties or effective losses would range from 6-18 for each mission at the 3-4 battalion level. The evidence indicates that the psychological impact of B-52 attacks is severe and that desertions mount sharply after attacks and thus add to effective losses.

4. To attain 25 percent casualties the B-52 strike force would have to stage 23 missions against forces in a pre-assault deployment and about 70 missions against forces in ^{pre-}assault deployment. The number of missions required would increase if the enemy provided replacements to maintain his force levels.

*Forces deployed in a 7 km radius about the outpost.

**Forces deployed in a 4.5 km radius about the outpost.

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5. The cost of a B-52 effort [] would be high. The political risks of further extension of B-52 operations into Laos while the Paris talks are on are many. Moreover, the attainment of a 25 percent attrition over a period of 3-4 weeks would require the diversion of 10-20 percent of the daily budgeted allocations of B-52 missions against Southeast Asia. Thus an effort [] would have to be measured against the loss of B-52 strike capabilities against probably higher priority targets in South Vietnam.

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